

A SITE OLD MESS

Council pays illegal travellers housing benefits

By ALEX PEAKE

A COUNCIL waging a £2million legal battle to evict travellers is having to pay them housing benefit.

Basildon District Council yes-

WORLD GOES MAD 1

terday admitted it was forced to pay £100 a month to at least 15 families who rent mobile homes on the land.

The families are still able to claim housing benefit as they are on

income support. Two families won a tribunal in 2006 – since when the council has paid out around £80,000 in benefits at Europe's biggest illegal camp in Crays Hill, Essex.

Tory council leader Tony Ball said: "It is a decision made by the Department of Work and Pensions." Last month the House of Lords

backed the council and ruled the travellers should move on.

But travellers rights campaigner Graham Puxon said: "The fact the council is paying people's rent should help their case to stay."

The Taxpayers Alliance called the situation "absolutely ludicrous".

a.peake@the-sun.co.uk



Freedom... Doug

'Asylum burglar' is freed by judge

WORLD GOES MAD 2

By RHODRI PHILLIPS

A CRIMINAL asylum seeker was FREED by the High Court yesterday – even though he is likely to reoffend.

A judge ruled that "undesirable" drug addict Ahmed Dog had to be released on bail because he has already been held for three years waiting to be deported.

It could be years before Dog, 32 – who has a history of burglary, theft and assault – is deported because of legal wrangling over whether it's safe for him to return to Somalia.

Deputy High Court judge John Howell QC said that a deportation order would not be "within a reasonable time".

He said: "There is plainly the risk of him reoffending but the type of offence he may commit is not of the most grave kind, though serious they undoubtedly are."

Commit

"This case is a sad reminder of the continuing difficulties in removing foreign nationals who commit offences."

He ordered that Dog is given bail "subject to stringent conditions".

Drug-and-alcohol addicted Dog came to the UK in 1997 to escape Somalia but by 2004 he had committed 18 crimes under 13 aliases. He was given a deportation notice in 2004 but was jailed for burglary.

In 2006 he was due to be released but has been in custody ever since waiting to be deported.

He was transferred to Bedford Prison after attacking other inmates in the detention centre.

Dog's lawyer Amanda Watson said being in custody was affecting his mental health.

She said he was no longer addicted to drink and drugs which had fuelled his crime spree and now had a son.



Reaping benefits... Mr Puxon insists council's rent will help families to stay

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Sun

SHOPKEEPER Doug Nettleton was amazed when he cracked open an egg – and found another one inside it during breakfast in St Lawrence, Isle of Wight.

92hr FOOTIE TREK

EIGHT football fans plan to visit all 92 league grounds in 92 hours to raise money for a charity in memory of teen leukemia victim Samantha Jones.

They will start their 2,600-mile journey at Oldham Athletic's Boundary Park stadium in Lancashire and hope to finish four days later at neighbouring Rochdale's Spotland ground.

Oldham girl Samantha, 16, died in 2002. Fund-raising organiser Richard Atwood, 32, said: "It might be hard going but we're looking forward to it."

SPOT